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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002165

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/23/2016  
TAGS: [1Z](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT TALABANI: UPBEAT ON RECONCILIATION  
PLANNING; BAGHDAD SECURITY STILL A PROBLEM

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2139  
[1B](#). BAGHDAD 2147

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad per 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) SUMMARY: President Talabani hosted the Ambassador for lunch June 23 with Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih. Talabani said that the Prime Minister's reconciliation proposal would go forward to the Council of Representatives. Barham expressed deep concern over as-yet unchallenged infiltration of the militias into national security forces and its implications for increased sectarian conflict. Plans for the Prime Minister to announce economic initiatives are being prepared for late next week. END SUMMARY.

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Three Presidencies Agree on Prime  
Minister's Reconciliation Proposal  
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[12](#). (C) President Talabani told Ambassador June 23 that the three Presidencies (President and two Vice Presidents, Prime Minister and two Deputy Prime Ministers, Speaker and two Deputy Speakers) had come to agreement the previous day on the PM's national reconciliation proposal (ref A). Talabani also confirmed that the PM would announce it to the Council of Representatives on Sunday, June 25. According to Talabani, some amendments to the plan had been made in response to Sunni VP Tariq Al-Hashemi's concerns (ref B) and that Tariq is now satisfied. Talabani said that he is ready to move forward and convene the Political Committee for National Security, but he has not yet received Tawafuq's nominations to participate. Talabani said that he was very satisfied with PM Maliki, who already has established regular consultations with the three Presidencies.

[13](#). (S) Talabani said that he expects to get names of those in the resistance who may be open to talking about laying down arms and joining the political process. Ansar Al Islam had indicated to DCG Fry that they were ready to disarm, Talabani noted, but they feared GOI reaction. Talabani said that he had passed back assurances that those who are serious about disarming would be welcomed back.

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Iran Update  
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[14](#). (S) Discussing reports from Vice President Adel Abd al-Mehdi's recent meetings in Iran, Talabani claimed that the Iranians are ready to suspend enrichment but only as a result of negotiations, not as a precondition. Talabani also said that Adel had been asked both by him and the Prime Minister to convey to the Iranians the GOI's insistence that Tehran must stop helping the terrorists. The Prime Minister, according to Talabani, is extremely worried about Iranian

interference, especially in Basrah.

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Security Issues  
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¶5. (C) Barham Salih described the security situation in Baghdad as "extremely bad," adding that the Iraqi security forces (ISF) are providing cover for violent elements to operate. Salih then recounted a recent Baghdad incident witnessed by a close associate, in which ISF did nothing to stop a kidnapping in progress at their checkpoint. Salih said that he knows Iraqis who carry fake identification with Christian names, since killings are occurring now based simply on whether one has a Shia or Sunni name. Barhim stated that the "militias are embedded inside the security forces." The Iraqi army is better than MOI forces, Salih acknowledged.

¶6. (S) Salih said that he was pleased that, at the last Ministerial Committee for National Security (MCNS) meeting, DCG Fry had pressed the Prime Minister to let security forces confront the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). Salih said that the PM is fully aware of the problem but that the PM believes that he has Moqtada al-Sadr's agreement to "disown" the rogue operations of the JAM, and the PM waiting for Moqtada to issue a fatwa to that effect. Barham said that he thinks the PM would go after the JAM once Sadr issues such a fatwa, but Salih stressed that it would be important for GOI forces to take on JAM.

¶7. (C) Barham also relayed that Oil Minister Shahrستاني is worried about oil export facilities in Basrah. Once the Basrah Security Plan is launched, Shahrستاني warned, Shia

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violence could target oil exports, as happened during Allawi's time. The Ambassador asked for assessments of new Minister of Interior Bolani. Barham hedged his response, noting that Bolani is "saying the right things." (NOTE: Talabani later gave a stronger endorsement of Bolani's first weeks. END NOTE.) Barham also recommended that we keep an eye on the media -- for example, SCIRI-sponsored Al-Furat was broadcasting accusations that the Ministry of Defense was not protecting Shia neighborhoods. Salih warned of growing divisions between MOD and MOI.

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Economic Plans  
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¶8. (C) Barham was upbeat on progress toward announcing a package of urgent economic initiatives. He said he would discuss it with the Prime Minister the next day. Salih noted that he is satisfied with progress in getting a focused ministerial committee on economic reform started. Salih also recounted that the PM had signed off on setting up specialized Oil and Energy committees. The economic plan, Salih explained, is for the PM to announce the package Wednesday or Thursday of the following week (June 28-29). Salih said he would share a copy of the PM's speech with the Ambassador in advance, adding that it would contain initiatives on investment, housing, fuel, anti-corruption, reconstruction, and the International Compact.  
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